

-D-16852

14 July 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR: Colonel L. K. White

SUBJECT : Revision or Modification of Agency Classification System

REFERENCES : (a) Memo dated 9 July to DD/A from Comptroller, same subject
(b) Memo dated 13 June to DD/A from AAD/P, same subject
(c) Undated memo from AD/SC to DD/A, same subject

1. In paragraph 2 of his memorandum the Comptroller agrees that the change in the classification system would be contrary to the contents of the memorandum from the Director to the Civil Service Commission, dated 10 August 1949, and in paragraph 3 that such contrary action would be subject to criticism by Congress, GAO, Civil Service, and others. He appears to argue that such a change should either not be made at all or approached with very great caution. I believe that if the classification system and our commitment to it interferes with the efficient administration of our Agency, with its very peculiar administrative problems, we should prepare proper studies with recommendations for the consideration of GAO and others, with a view to gaining their concurrence in a change in our basic approach to Classification and Wage Administration. We have taken this approach to meet other Agency administrative problems, many times successfully. If our arguments to the outside agencies concerned are not sufficiently valid and strong to gain their concurrence, we certainly have no argument for making any change within the Agency without their concurrence.

2. The memorandum from the Personnel Office, I believe, fails in that in no way was consideration given to a possible solution through the elimination of T/Os, which to a certain extent seem to be part of the problem. For instance, paragraph 3 of the Personnel paper comments on the problem of increasing the grade of a senior employee when the T/O does not provide a higher grade. If the T/O is the only problem, lets eliminate the T/O. That paragraph has an internal inconsistency in its own arguments, in that if a job to be done is so important as to require an official of higher grade than the T/O position provided, then obviously that job, at least for that time, should be classified at a higher level.

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3. Paragraph 4 of the Personnel paper suggests that we try the proposed system in a restricted degree to see whether it will work. I believe it is obvious that once such a system is started, it will be impossible to stop it without creating very serious personnel morale problems. The next-to-last paragraph of the Personnel memorandum is obviously illogical, probably because it is based on a false premise. It says, "... its purpose is to permit operating offices to use exceptional persons on special jobs without regard to grade levels of either the persons or the jobs, and to permit promotion of persons who perform exceptionally in jobs which cannot be reclassified to accommodate their promotions."

* In the first instance, if the person is exceptional and the job is special, requiring these exceptional skills or classification, then any reasonable classification approach would establish a grade commensurate with the classification of the man required to do it. In the second instance, persons who are performing exceptionally in jobs either are doing so on a short-term basis and can be rewarded within the Career Program, or are doing it over a long period of time in a manner sufficient for justifying upward reclassification of the position. The world is filled with people who are performing, in an outstanding manner, jobs which have limited demands. If the city dog catcher is doing a better job of catching dogs than has ever been done before, essentially that is what the city government is looking for--the best dog catcher they could find. However, the job of catching dogs, no matter how well done, is worth only a certain amount of money to the city.

5. I might direct a comment to paragraph 3 of the OSO paper. If a long-term incumbent, by reason of his increasing ability, does not make a particular job a bigger one by the sheer force of his wider range of cognizance and competence, he should not be rewarded with a higher salary except that which is provided for by the longevity system. A further comment, of lesser concern and value, on the OSO paper is that their proposal obviously would result in a duplication staff-wise and record-wise of other Agency components.

6. I have not prepared a memorandum for your signature, but if you concur generally in my evaluation of the attached papers, I shall prepare a memorandum to the Acting Assistant Director (Personnel) requesting further study with particular attention to the arguments I have here presented. My language probably would need some editing, and certainly a copy of the memorandum to Personnel should go to the originator of the whole "can of worms," OSO.

3 Att (Listed in References)
SA/ADD/A:RSW:jeb
cc: ADD/A chrono
ADD/A subject

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